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WINTER CONSUMER ELECTRONICS REPORT

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by Marc Wielage

So far, the two biggest hooplas of the show are DAT--the ubiquitous Digital Audio Tape recorder, which is showing at no less than a dozen booths-- and Toshiba's 3-D camcorder, which some industry observers say is just \$2850 worth of gimmickry. No doubt, Toshiba will be getting a lot of publicity out of this gimmicky product, designed to appeal to the glitzy "Sharper Image" crowd. This "3-D Cam" is a lightweight (under 4 lbs.) VHS-C unit that has two separate 1/2" 300,000 pixel CCD pickups.

This makes it two, two, two cameras in one! It doubles the scan rate to 60 frames per second, which Toshiba claims will minimize flicker--the worst problem seen in past 3-D video demos. Special glasses synchronize with the on-screen image to create a depth-perspective effect. 3-D buffs won't be able to buy this camcorder until summer at the earliest, which is just as well; it appears to be of questionable interest for all but the most gimmick-crazed videophiles.

Several manufacturers are announcing delivery of DAT players, including car DAT/tuner in-dash units. One of the first confirmed table models is one from

Harman-Kardon, which will be available in the Spring for around \$2200. Even the company admits that at that price, they'll only sell about a thousand of them in the U.S. Others predict that once DAT prices inevitably move downwards, they could prove immensely popular. Sony, who just completed the purchase of CBS Records, is rumored to be readying a "DAT-man" series of DAT portables, eventually to be priced under \$500.

The Laserdisc market is opening up in a big way, with new combo "multi-disc" players arriving from Magnavox, Pioneer, Sony and Yamaha. These models will play conventional 4-3/4" CDs, CD singles, CD-V discs, as well as 8" and 12" Laserdiscs. One Sony spokesman told us they were reluctant to get into the LV market before, but now that they can sell the product as being a "universal" disc player, it has a built-in non-obsolescence factor that should quell buyers' fears.

There are lots of developments happening in the area of improving TV quality. Now available in Japan are TV sets featuring IDTV (improved-definition TV) and EDTV (extended-definition TV, essentially the same thing), which enhance the existing line-standard through digital tricks and improved circuitry. Toshiba will be pushing their own double-scanning non-interlaced TV set, already seen at previous shows. Coming up later on in the 1990's is true HDTV (high definition TV), featuring a wider picture with over 1000 scan lines. RCA will be demonstrating ACTV (advanced compatible TV), which has 1050 lines and a widescreen picture, and a Japanese consortium is exhibiting their MUSE prototype system, a true HDTV system with 1125 lines and a similar widescreen aspect ratio.

In other new product news, Panasonic is showing a new 45" rearscreen unit with S-VHS inputs, a high-end model made to compete with similar projectors from Pioneer and Sony. They're also introducing two new mid-priced VCRs, non-Hi-Fi models with an improved on-screen programming system. Sony will be having private demos of two new combo LV/CD players and at least one ED Beta VCR.

Aside from new products, the entire electronics biz was abuzz with news of the near-panic earlier in the week, with the Japanese yen sinking to its lowest ebb

since World War II: a mere 121 to the dollar. This will inevitably result in some precedent-setting price hikes on all VCRs, tape decks, TV sets, and related gear over the coming year, but probably not quite matching the rate of inflation. Most manufacturers, including Panasonic and Toshiba, are considering

increases of between 5% and 10%, which means the \$500 VCR you bought last year might now sell for \$550 or more. Even worse, this means the \$1000 VCR you buy this year may lack certain features and the overall quality of a similar \$1000 VCR from last year.

Japanese manufacturers are also hesitating in releasing new products with advanced breakthroughs, simply because their increased price-tags will make them unappealing to the U.S. market. For example, Sharp has perhaps the most deluxe consumer Super VHS VCR on the market in Japan, with a jog/shuttle knob, flying erase head, and other exciting features, but it would have to sell for over \$2000 if it were sold over here. So don't hold your breath at seeing this one in North America, folks.

It's been one of those shows. First my connecting flight from Dallas to Las Vegas was three hours late (the airport's two de-icing machines were working overtime), and then when I arrive in Vegas my luggage is missing. There is no worse sight than watching a luggage carousel turning round and round for over an hour. In any case, a small trip to the airport at 4:15 AM found my luggage safe and sound.

So I missed most of press day, but managed to drag myself through the first day of the show even though I was ready to find the nearest bed for some much deserved sleep. The first two days had a lot to offer as far as new products were concerned, but the most humorous and outrageous rumor running rampant in the press room concerned a Toshiba sale of HDTV technology to Khaddafi (does anyone know how to spell this guy's name?). I'll bet the state department is "real" concerned over this one.

Anyway, let's get to the new video stuff. RCA had the most interesting display of the show with its ACTV demo. This new system is not HDTV, but rather a wide-screen, high resolution system that the company hopes will be adopted by the FCC. Unlike HDTV, ACTV is fully compatible with the NTSC system we have now, as it does not require an extra (6MHz) channel. The displayed image is essentially free of NTSC artifacts and has in excess of 420 lines of resolution per picture height, both horizontally and vertically. The system looks quite good, but I personally hope that it never sees the light of day. Once the FCC adopts a system like this we can kiss HDTV goodbye.

In the large screen department we have a newcomer from Europe. B Vidikron showed two-piece projection units with screen sizes of 4-10 feet. The projectors can be ceiling mounted or purchased in coffee-table configurations. They aren't cheap though, plan to spend roughly \$5000. In the more affordable market Panasonic is showing the PTK-4587S 45-inch rear-screen TV with an S-VHS input, and a built-in surround sound decoder. Pricing and availability will be announced. NEC, a manufacturer known for its large-screen sets also adds an S-video input to a couple of its big screens: the PJ-4160S (\$2700), the PJ-4170S (\$3100), The PJ-4660s (\$3000), and the PJ-4670S (\$3400). If you are looking for a big direct view set RCA has one in the 31-inch category. The G31100 features surround sound (seemingly a new addition to the large screen TV market), and a 56-button unified remote.

Normal-sized fare is also available--complete with S-Video capability from companies such as Panasonic, Yamaha, and even a couple of Korean brands.

The super-small hasn't been left out either. Following in GE's footsteps, RCA has introduced an under-the-counter 5-1/2-inch color TV with an AM/FM radio. The RCA Spacemaker (wonder where they got that name?) CSM055 (\$279) can also be powered by an optional rechargeable battery pack or via a car cord. If you want real small then take a look at Sharp's 3ML100 3-inch color LCD TV. It looks like your basic LCD set (which isn't all that great) and comes with AC and antenna adaptors, earphone, carrying case, and of course batteries.

As most CEFORUM members already know, the LaserDisc format is still regarded as the highest quality consumer video format currently available, and Sony is actually showing a couple of LV players for possible U.S. distribution. Marc

will have more info on this. In the CDV arena Yamaha is showing the first unit that does not play LV discs, but only CD and CDV discs. The CDV-S100 will be available in March for \$499. Good luck Yamaha!

After hearing what the new Dolby Pro logic surround sound system has to offer you may never go back to standard decoders again. I managed to pull myself out of bed yesterday morning to attend a NEC press conference for the new PLD-910 surround unit with Dolby Pro Logic. Now I don't know if it was because I was half asleep or what, but Pro Logic is definitely a step in the right direction.

It offers significantly more front to back separation than standard fare. The 910 has digital delay with a 1-94 milisecond user settable range, a 41-button wireless remote, and a rear channel frequency range of 5-20,000 Hz. It will be available in April for \$949. But plan to spend more, as the unit is unpowered and you will need a rear channel amplifier.

Now for the audio side, and a very interesting offering from AudioAccess. The PX-240 CD Changer holds not 5 CDs, not 10 CDs, not 20 CDs, and not even 50 CDs, but 240 CDs!!! Imagine a unit that can hold an entire collection (not a Steve Schechter collection, but a big one anyway), and include 4X oversampling, two D/A converters, a RS-223 interface, digital outputs etc. The PX-240 measures only 17 W x 16 D x 6-1/2 H, and can store up to 10 playlists of 99 songs or discs in each playlist. Don't run out to the store to buy this one yet though,

it costs a whopping five grand. The unit is currently designed for custom installations, but in two years the PX-240 might be mass produced for a \$1,200 price tag. I'll be first on line.

Finally, if you want to catch up on the past take a look at the GE 7-4100J replica radio. It's a 3/4 scaled replica of the 1930's classic GE J100. The unit consumes 1/20th the power of its predecessor, has two built-in antennas (AM and FM), and is a real steal at only \$75. The original cost \$99 back in 1932, or the equivalent of \$817 in 1987 dollars.

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[Ed. For more CES News and other Consumer Electronic News, Reviews, chat and the like, You can GO CEFORUM at any CompuServe prompt and join in!!]

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PRINTER HELP

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by Tom Dewar

These are the print commands for the C. Itoh Prowriter 8510 printer. Many Atari programs are set up for the Prowriter as well as the Epson, because it is a popular printer among Atari owners. Some programs do not support the Prowriter and this seems to mainly be because the programmer doesn't have access to the codes for it. To try and help, I have typed these from the Printer manual. I hope they help.

GENERAL FORMAT

COMMAND	DESCRIPTION	BASIC FORMAT
-----	-----	-----

Carriage Return      Returns carriage to

CR

	left position	CHR\$(13)
Line Feed	Moves paper up one line	LF CHR\$(10)
Form Feed (Top of Form)	Advances paper one full page length from present position	FF CHR\$(12)
Back Space	Moves the print head back one space	BS CHR\$(08)
Set Tabs	Sets a tab at each column designated	ESC ( ,a,b,c. CHR\$(27);CHR\$(40); "a,b,c."
Clear Tabs	Clears tab at each column designated	ESC ) ,a,b,c. CHR\$(27);CHR\$(41); "a,b,c."
Clear All Tabs	Clears all tabs	ESC 0 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(48)
Horizontal Tab	Sets Carriage to next tab position	HT CHR\$(09)
Pica Pitch	Sets 10 cpi pica pitch (640 dpl, 80 dpi)	ESC N CHR\$(27);CHR\$(78)
Elite Pitch	Sets 12 cpi elite pitch (768 dpl, 96 dpi)	ESC E CHR\$(27);CHR\$(69)
Compressed Pitch	Sets 17 cpi (1088 dpl) compressed pitch(136 dpi)	ESC Q CHR\$(27);CHR\$(81)
Proportional	Selects Proportional Mode (1280 dpl, 160 dpi)	ESC P CHR\$(27);CHR\$(80)
Elongated Character Select	Sets elongated character mode	SO CHR\$(14)
Elongated Character Clear	Clears elongated character mode	SI CHR\$(15)
Boldface Select	Sets boldface type mode	ESC ! CHR\$(27);CHR\$(33)
Boldface Clear	Clears boldface type mode	ESC " CHR\$(27);CHR\$(34)
Underline Select	Selects underlined text mode	ESC X CHR\$(27);CHR\$(88)
Underline Clear	Clears underlined text mode	ESC Y CHR\$(27);CHR\$(89)
Character Repeat	Causes the next Character to be printed nnn times	ESC R, nnn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(82); "nnn"

Line Feed 1/6 Inch	Sets 1/6 inch spacing between lines	ESC A CHR\$(27);CHR\$(65)
Line Feed 1/8 Inch	Sets 1/8 inch spacing between lines	ESC B CHR\$(27);CHR\$(66)
Custom Line Feed	Sets nn/144 inch spacing between lines	ESC T, nn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(84) "nn"
Forward Line Feed	Moves paper in normal (forward) direction	ESC f CHR\$(27);CHR\$(102)
Reverse Line Feed	Moves paper in reverse (backward) direction	ESC r CHR\$(27);CHR\$(114)
Bidirectional Printing	Printer prints in both horizontal directions	ESC < CHR\$(27);CHR\$(60)
Unidirectional Printing	Printer prints in forward direction only	ESC > CHR\$(27);CHR\$(62)
Left Margin Set	Sets left margin to position nnn	ESC 8, nnn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(56); "nnn"
Greek Characters	Selects Greek Character Set	ESC & CHR\$(27);CHR\$(38)
Graphic Symbols	Selects Graphic Symbol Character Set	ESC # CHR\$(27);CHR\$(35)
Alphanumeric Characters	Selects (normal) alphanumeric character Set	ESC \$ CHR\$(27);CHR\$(36)
Incremental Print Mode	Selects Incremental Print Mode	ESC [ CHR\$(27);CHR\$(91)
Logic Seek Mode	Selects (normal) logic-seek mode	ESC ] CHR\$(27);CHR\$(93)
Bit Image Graphics	Dot by dot firing mode (nnnn = # of dot positions ex. 200=0200)	ESC S, nnnn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(83); "nnnn"
Dot Column Repeat	Following 1 byte is repeatedly printed in 8 dots/dot column	ESC V, nnnn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(86); "nnnn"
Dot Addressing	The head is moved to the dot position indicated by nnnn	ESC F, nnnn CHR\$(27);CHR\$(70); "nnnn"
Dot by Dot spacing in proportional mode		

1 Dot Space	ESC 1 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(49)
2 Dot Space	ESC 2 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(50)
3 Dot Space	ESC 3 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(51)
4 Dot Space	ESC 4 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(52)
5 Dot Space	ESC 5 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(53)
6 Dot Space	ESC 6 CHR\$(27);CHR\$(54)

Jumping Jack Flash!!!

(You mean even FASTER!?)

by Mr. Goodprobe

As you know, one of the "promised 2nd quarter next year" products for the Atari

St is a plug-in 68030 module to turn your St into greased lightning, and wouldn't you know it, they are working on a replacement for the 68030 already..

listen to this:

"You're lucky,  
I just happened to read your article. I'm one of the 68070's architects. Let me describe the beast. You can find in one single chip:

- a 68000 CPU :
  - full 32-bit architecture
  - 68000 programming model
  - 68000 instruction set
  - 10 MHz clock speed
  - enhanced bus error handling (68010 like)
- a MMU :
  - virtual address translation for 8 or 128 segments of 2Mb or 128Kb, memory protection (user/super, R-W-E access) allowing dynamic stack allocation transparent when unused adding one wait state when used
- a DMA :
  - 2 independent channels
  - byte and word transfers up to 3.2 Mbytes/s
  - single cycle or burst mode
  - max block size 128Kb
  - compatible with 68430 / 68440 / 68450
- RS232-C :
  - one independent receive and transmit channel
  - independent baud rates
  - full/half duplex
  - auto echo mode

compatible with 2641 / 2661 / 2691

- timers :
  - 3 16-bit timers
  - match / count / capture mode
  - pulse generator
  - compatible with 68230

- I2C bus :
  - two lines serial bus
  - transfer rate up to 100 Kbits/s
  - master / slave mode
  - multimaster build in protocol

Unfortunately, there is no way to implement all these functions in a 68000 pin compatible package. Timers and serial busses need their own interfaces. It is packaged in an 84-pin PLCC.

This chip has been designed by Philips and is being sampled with 100% functionality. It will be available on the market in the last quarter of this year and its price is estimated to be approximately \$25 at the end of 88.

Let me know if you want more information.

Junien Labrousse ( junien@prls.UUCP )"

I think one thing that never fails to amaze me is the speed at which our technology is changing!!! I hear that the newest Cray due to be released in 1990 is 6 times faster than anything known previously, and will be a desktop computer! Wow!

Keep those Atari's hummin'  
Mr. Goodprobe

## ST User Group Profile

ST J.A.U.G.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

ST Jacksonville Atari Users Group  
5912 Collins Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32210

Voice #: (904) 783-3319  
BBS Number: (904) 223-7772

### Profile:

Family Oriented User Group  
Weekly Meetings every Tuesday night 6-10pm  
4-6 ST workstations every week for learning  
ST-Report Carrier

\*  
\* ST-Report #17 FoReM BBS Coupon Offer  
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 \* Specify ST or PC Please \*
   
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 \*

## GENIE ST FILE DIRECTORY

Compiled by Ron Kovacs from GENie

From time to time, I will update you via this column with a listing of the NEW files available on GENie Pay Service. I hope you find this of interest and not a waste of space.

A quick explanation of the headings:

No.	File Number
File Name	Name of the file
Type	Transfer used X Xmodem
Address	Uploader of the file
YYMMDD	Year, month, day of upload
Bytes	File size in bytes
Access	Amount file was downloaded
Lib	Library file stored in

### ALL Libraries

No.	File Name	Type	Address	YYMMDD	Bytes	Access	Lib
5496	CASSETTE.ARC	X	K.MEYLOR	880111	13860	12	2
	Desc: prints labels for cassette cases.						
5495	BEAUTY.ARC	X	B.DAVIS	880111	34020	11	12
	Desc: MAC nude in MACpaint format						
5494	TEMPTRES.ARC	X	B.DAVIS	880111	23940	9	12
	Desc: MAC nude, in MACpaint format						
5493	HYPERSTRINGS.ARC	X	J.JOUBERT	880111	10080	4	2
	Desc: show printable chars in binary file						
5491	CAT_8_TOP_22.ARC	X	DARLAH	880111	149940	4	13
	Desc: Interlink information						
5490	PATTY.ARC	X	B.DAVIS	880111	34020	8	12
	Desc: MAC nude in Macpaint format						
5489	FOLLIES.ARC	X	B.DAVIS	880111	13860	9	12
	Desc: MAC nude in Macpaint format						
5488	GRIDGIRL.ARC	X	B.DAVIS	880111	16380	7	12
	Desc: MAC nude in MAC format						
5487	TOP_45.ARC	X	TOWNS	880111	12600	11	1
	Desc: Atari Corp Online, ROBB Demo						
5486	TOP_36.ARC	X	TOWNS	880111	20160	3	1
	Desc: Topic 36: Atari buys Federated						
5485	DISNEY01.ARC	X	RAZZER	880110	27720	13	5
	Desc: DISNEY CHARACTERS IN SPC FORMAT						
5484	DISNEY2.ARC	X	RAZZER	880110	75600	9	5
	Desc: DISNEY CHARACTERS IN SPC FORMAT						
5483	DISNEY3.ARC	X	RAZZER	880110	65520	7	5
	Desc: DISNEY CHARACTERS IN SPC FORMAT						

5482	TIGERS1.ARC	X RAZZER	880110	94500	4	5
	Desc: CEYES RENDITIONS OF TIGERS IN SPU					
5481	TIGERS2.ARC	X RAZZER	880110	93240	3	5
	Desc: CMPTEREYES, DIGISPEC RENDITION IN SPE					
5479	UNI20.ARC (UNITERM 2.0)	X R-FLASHMAN	880110	141120	39	7
	Desc: Uniterm 2.0a, Edit #006 Terminal					
5478	RAINCOAT.ARC	X B.DAVIS	880110	15120	19	12
	Desc: Nude, MAC format					
5477	INGRID.ARC	X B.DAVIS	880110	16380	7	12
	Desc: MAC nude					
5476	BOOP.ARC	X B.DAVIS	880110	7560	31	12
	Desc: Betty Boop nude - MAC format					
5475	STARNETV124.ARC	X SPIKER	880110	119700	16	7
	Desc: STAR-NET BBS V1.24 New PD release					
5474	CUTS.MCS	X INTERSECT	880110	7560	18	11
	Desc: Cuts Like a Knife, MCS					
5473	MUSICINVENTORY.ARC V1.3]	X L.DUKE	880110	44100	27	10
	Desc: MUSIC COLLECTION INVENTORY UPDATED!					
5471	BLOCKUP.ARC	X TOMMARVIN	880109	21420	70	2
	Desc: New P.P.Font for Pub.Part.Only					
5470	ARC_UNARC.HLP	X DARLAH	880109	7560	24	1
	Desc: Help on extracting files on GENIE					
5469	ARCSHELL 1.6 PRG	X D.FLORY	880109	7560	75	2
	Desc: Unarced Arcshell.prg					
5468	MMC_LINEA.ARC	X J.CHEN	880109	10080	27	3
	Desc: Megamax's linea routines					
5466	MSPLAYER.ARC	X WHOLDING	880108	46620	40	11
	Desc: MS song player (Compiled GFA)					
5465	BBSCHRG2.ARC	X BITBUG.RC	880108	6300	71	7
	Desc: Update on BBS/modem charges!					
5464	PD LIB FOR ALCYON.ARC	X CBARRON	880108	79380	9	3
	Desc: a pd standard library for alcyon c					
5463	FRIENDS.ARC	X RJROBINSON	880107	2520	24	11
	Desc: Music Studio - Friends					
5462	WILMTEL.ARC	X RJROBINSON	880107	1260	66	11
	Desc: William Tell - Music Studio					
5461	MANDOLIN.ARC	X RJROBINSON	880107	6300	65	11
	Desc: Music Studio - Mandolin Rain					
5460	SPECPICT.ARC	X A.PICCIONE	880107	113400	15	7
	Desc: digi/spec pics					
5459	CLEOPHA.MCS	X INTERSECT	880107	7560	35	11
	Desc: Joplin for MCS, or use MCSPLAY					
5458	AXELF.MCS	X INTERSECT	880107	7560	49	11
	Desc: AXELF, the name says it all for MCS					
5457	DREAMS.MCS	X INTERSECT	880107	10080	16	11
	Desc: Dreams by Van Halen for MCS					
5456	ROLLOVER.MCS	X INTERSECT	880107	7560	45	11
	Desc: Rollover Beethoven for MCS					
5455	INVENTORY-PRO.200	X HITECH	880107	191520	38	6
	Desc: V2.00 OF INVENTORY-PRO					
5454	MARKET_M.ARC	X R.FARRELL	880107	20160	13	6
	Desc: STOCK MARKET MONOCHROME CHARTS					
5453	MARKET_C.ARC	X R.FARRELL	880107	17640	14	6
	Desc: COLOR STOCK MARKET CHARTS					
5452	INV-PRO_UPG.ARC	X HITECH	880107	15120	26	6
	Desc: INVENTORY-PRO					
5451	LISAW.ARC	X DMAY	880107	36540	65	5
	Desc: Spectrum picture of Lisa?					
5450	GIRL FACE WITH 'EAR'.ARC	X DMAY	880107	41580	15	5
	Desc: Spectrum picture of a Girls Face.					

5449	MAC II BOUNCING APPLES	X DMAY	880107	32760	33	5
	Desc: Spectrum pic: Mac II Ray Tracing					
5448	KAHNAKAS.ARC	X DMAY	880107	289800	77	10
	Desc: Amazing Spectrum show, moving balls.					
5446	PCPDIAL4.ARC	X C.ASBELL	880106	16380	42	7
	Desc: FLASH 1.52 PC PURSUIT AUTODIAL					
5445	STMARKET.ARC	X R.FARRELL	880106	84420	66	6
	Desc: STOCK MARKET TECHNICAL ANALYSIS					
5444	JIGSAW1_2.ARC	X G.W.MOORE	880106	35280	70	8
	Desc: Make jigsaw puzzle out of pics					
5441	BBSEXPS_2.ARC	X BOBBRODIE	880105	98280	18	7
	Desc: Part 2 of BBS Express! ST demo					
5440	BBSEXPS_1.ARC	X BOBBRODIE	880105	123480	18	7
	Desc: part 1 of demo for BBS Express! ST					
5437	ST'ING_V20.ARC	X DC.SIGNORINI	880105	42840	18	7
	Desc: ST'ING: FOREM BBS DOOR VERSION 2.0					
5434	EMPMAPS1.ARC	X L.RICKERT	880105	10080	44	8
	Desc: 11 NEW MAPS FOR EMPIRE!					
5433	MONOWARE.PRG	X D.MAULDIN	880105	2520	340	2
	Desc: Monochrome Emulator for Color system					
5432	TOCHATTA.MCS	X INTERSECT	880105	12600	47	11
	Desc: A MCS Bach tune.					
5431	WHENYOUR.MCS	X INTERSECT	880105	6300	33	11
	Desc: Songfile of for MCS					
5430	YOU2CTY.MCS	X INTERSECT	880105	15120	72	11
	Desc: You belong to the City... MCS					
5429	ST TALK BB DISC.ARC	X DARLAH	880105	35280	56	13
	Desc: ST Talk Professional Discussion					
5428	DM_MAPS_LEVEL1_3.ARC	X D.ANGUS4	880105	21420	138	8
	Desc: 4 MAPS AND DOC FILE LIST OF CHAMPS					
5427	STT2DEMO.ARC	X QMI	880105	149940	380	7
	Desc: ST-Talk Pro DEMO 1/1/88 version.					
5425	STT2DEMO.DOC	X QMI	880105	17640	202	7
	Desc: ST-TALK Pro demo documentation					
5424	MEGAMATIC115.ARC	X LEPULLEY	880105	16380	185	2
	Desc: MegaMatic - version 1.15					
5423	BRCHEAT2.ARC	X P.FOLLOWELL	880105	21420	40	8
	Desc: Breach Editor v1.2					
5422	REMOTE DO UPDATED.ARC	X B.HAMMERTON	880104	7560	69	7
	Desc: FLASH 1.52 DO Remote Controller					
5420	MS_PLAYER.ARC	X J.W.DAVIS	880104	26460	58	11
	Desc: Music Studio song player					

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#### ATARI SCUTTLEBITS

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by Bob Kelly

ATARI! What next for home enthusiasts?

COMDEX has come and gone. In the past, this time of the year was one of excitement for Atari HOME computer owners. New products were announced. The home user was the center of attention. Sales were up and the image of a game machine company was fading fast. Yet, even with the smiles on corporate Atari's face at this year's COMDEX, an air of somber reality pervades the user community. Times are a-changing.

Despite a flood of new products, Atari stock is down to the neighborhood of \$6.50 a share, reflecting a general feeling of uncertainty. Third quarter earnings have been reported and they are lower per share than the same period of 1986. While two-thirds of Atari's sales remain overseas, there is no reason

to expect a dramatic expansion in these markets. Foreign sales have been impacted much in the same fashion as in the U.S., consumer expenditures are projected to decline since the stock market crash of October 20. Consensus projected GNP growth for the U.S. in 1988 has nosedived to 1.9%. Last, but certainly not the least, the purchase of the Federated group of stores by Atari

could hamper rapid achievement of other short-term corporate objectives by straining cash reserves.

As for Atari's strategy, it appears the game machine is back with a vengeance. Atari is now a retailer and manufacturer of workstations for the scientific, high-end educational, and business markets. However, the 68030 (32 bit) machine is still not ready and the 8 bit user is clearly being lost in the shuffle. To the home user, this all translates into a sense that Atari Corporation has lost its sense of direction. (I have heard this phrase from users more in the last month than any other comment in my four years writing this column). In fact, all that happened is that the home computer user (520/1040 ST) has been relegated to a lesser status. Does it really make sense for the user community to react so negatively? Let's examine a few of the recent developments in more detail before drawing a final conclusion.

## I. COMDEX

InfoWorld covered Atari's display at Comdex in its Nov. 9 issue stating that Atari took aim; "Directly at business and technical markets announcing a slew of new products at COMDEX, including PC clones, a CD ROM player, multiuser software for the ST and Mega lines, and a radical computing engine based on the Inmos T-800 RISC processor."

The new high-end workstation is called Abaq. It requires at minimum 4 megabytes of DRAM with each workstation expandable to 64 megabytes. The software [Helios] supporting Abaq can read both Ms-Dos floppies and Unix hard disks. This machine, owing to its very high resolution graphics, is reputed to be capable of providing a picture similar to your camera.

The IBM PC clones introduced are replacing those announced last year, but NEVER introduced into the U.S. market (this established Atari as an industry leader in at least one segment of the domestic market - vaporware). Atari's variations on the PC clone are:

Table 1

Clone Type	Expandability	Cost
PC2 XT	4 slots	<\$1000
PC4 AT	5 "	<\$2000
PC5 16-MHZ-80386 machine		?

The PC2 and PC4 are Atari machines intended to compete in what is in fact a shrinking market. To illustrate, according to IBM, they have shipped over 1 million of the new PS/2 machines in the last seven months. The new operating system (OS/2) to accompany the PS/2 machines goes on sale this month. OS/2 supersedes the software standard set earlier by IBM. There is little doubt by most analysts that OS/2 is the standard of the future. Thus, much of the new high powered IBM software will not work with the first generation clones such

as those being introduced by Atari.

The CD ROM is a product Atari indicated it would like to market more than a year ago. It is capable of being connected to both an Atari computer as well as a stereo system, a pleasant surprise for the audiophile. What software will be available for introduction with this machine remains a mystery.

## II. Third Quarter Earnings

Atari's third quarter 1987 net income rose by 9% to \$9.9 million or 17 cents a share versus \$9.1 million or 21 cents a share in 1986. (The number of shares outstanding rose to 58 million from 47.5 million over the past year.)

Revenue rose by 34% to \$80.4 million from \$59.9 million for the same period a year earlier. Overseas demand was accountable for about two thirds of Atari's total revenue with the 1040ST being the sales leader.

## III. Analysis

This is a lot to digest. What in the world does it all mean? First, let's look at the cost data and expected delivery dates for the new products introduced at COMDEX.

Table 2  
Projected Availability

Cost Item	by US\$	by Atari	by Joe Skeptic
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Abaq1/	\$5,000	Apr/June '88	Late '88/'89
PC clones	*	Jan/Mar '88	June/Dec '88
IDRIS2/	800	?	?
Moses LAN) 3/	?	?	1989
CD ROM	599	February '88	Mid 1988

\* see Table 1

1/ 4 megabyte single processor system only

2/ multiuser operating system

3/ local Area Network (LAN) which will connect up to 17 PCs, Megas, Mac, STs

Atari expects most of the products to be on the market within six months. Given Atari's reputation for making scheduled dates, there is a natural reluctance to bet when the products will be on the dealers' shelves. An old friend, Joe Skeptic, made his own estimates as to when these products might appear, shown in the 3rd column of Table 2. Frankly, I believe even Joe's estimates in some cases may be optimistic. Why is timing important? IBM plans to introduce a whole slate of high-end Unix machines to the U.S. market in 1988. Delays make Atari's already uphill battle for market share more difficult.

Another immediate issue is how Atari plans to sell these high-end products in the U.S.? Again, they are aimed at the business/educational/scientific markets.

They are not intended to be sold through mail order or Mom and Pop stores. They will require not only a dealer network but a complete service network both of which will take Atari years to accomplish.

We now know why Federated was purchased in the U.S. But, what happens beyond the 4 to 5 states where Federated stores are located? Atari either needs to

buy more regional outlets or make a deal with a major computer retailer, such as Entre Computers. The former option appears unlikely for the next year or so

given Atari's cash position after the purchase of Federated and the decline in the value of its stock. So, who in the latter category is going to deal with Atari in the U.S.? My bet is that Atari will first concentrate on marketing their new machines and establishing a dealer network in Europe, not the U.S. Once a successful operation has been demonstrated overseas, more computer retailers should be interested domestically.

If a growing percentage of Atari's corporate talent focuses on the business/scientific market, the 520/1040 ST user might well have some justification to wonder what Atari has in store for them. Does Atari expect the vast majority of present or future home users to move up to the Mega machine given the present price structure? Unlikely.

Like it or not, ignoring the home user and concentrating its limited resources upon LONG-TERM objectives has to be a wise market strategy for Atari at this juncture. The fundamental concern with this strategy is Atari may have taken on too much too soon financially and some of the product offerings may have a tough time penetrating the U.S. market (PC2, non-postscript laser printer, etc.). Failure to deliver products this time WILL carry serious market consequences. There are no easy answers as to the future despite what others might say. Unless one is sitting in the board room, any evaluation is nothing

more than an guess (even here it still might be). For the home user, sit back, buckle up, 1988 could be one hell of a ride. The game is definitely for high stakes - Atari's future market power.

#### Atarifest-1987

- o Atarifest 1987 has to be rated a huge success. The crowd attending easily exceeded the 4,000 projected (probably closer to 5,000). Reported sales by vendors were very good to excellent and some products such as the Magic Sac were completely sold out.
- o Atari was present showing off their equipment. It was a good marketing opportunity and they took advantage of it as they should.
- o Local advertising for the event was poor. This makes the huge turn-out all the more remarkable. What apparently happened was while areas along the east coast heard about the show, those in the Metropolitan D.C./Maryland/Virginia area were largely in the dark. A better job has to be done next year.

Sorry no product endorsements ....wait till February for the best of '88. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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NEXT WEEK in ST-REPORT ISSUE #18

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PC Pursuit changes Logon Procedure.....Probing Your ST by Mr. Goodprobe..

.....Zaphodyne Software Review details.....Return of the FoReM Coupon.....

....JACG Rumors.....ICD Rumors....Oasis Rumors....and the start of the official ST-Report carriers listing....and much more!!

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\*\*\*\*Special Additional Information\*\*\*\*  
In this CIS Edition Only the following  
information was found in the middle of  
this upload.

Analog Magazine was bought out by a  
new publishing company. Full details  
on this in ZMagazine 89 and ST-Report  
No.18. Or call the Syndicate ZMag BBS  
at (201) 968-8148 for the newsfile.

Ron Kovacs 1/14/88